

Apollo

The Greek god of light and the sun, truth and prophecy, healing, plague and disease, musical and artistic representation, and archery

Background Information

- Son of Leto (goddess of motherhood) and Zeus (god of the sky)
- Served as a Trojan warrior in the Trojan War
- Taught Orpheus, a musician so talented he could tame beasts, to play the lyre
- His arrows could send plague —When Agamemnon held the daughter of Apollo's priest captive during the Trojan War, Apollo rained arrows of plague on the Greek forces in order to get revenge
- His primary attributes are bow and arrow, a laurel crown, the lyre, and most importantly, the tripod, which symbolizes his prophetic powers



Apollo's Birth

- When Zeus' wife, Hera, became aware that Leto was pregnant with Apollo, she grew extremely jealous
- Hera forced Leto to roam the earth in search of a place to give birth
- Leto sought shelter at Delos, a floating island, which met Hera's harsh restrictions
- The island was encircled by a flock of swans, which is why the swan is sacred to Apollo
- To escape the island, Apollo turned into a dolphin and caused a great storm on the sea, then guided a ship in distress to the mainland
- Delos became an important sanctuary to Apollo



Apollo's First Achievement

- Apollo's first achievement was to rid Delphi, an oracle, of the python that stood guard while "Sibyl" gave out her prophecies
- Apollo killed Python with his bow and arrows
- He not only took charge of the oracle, but also rid the neighboring countryside of the destruction that Python brought
- Although Apollo had to make amends for killing Python, it was an important feat because Delphi became his most important oracle center
- Apollo's words were delivered by a local woman called Pythia in honor of Python



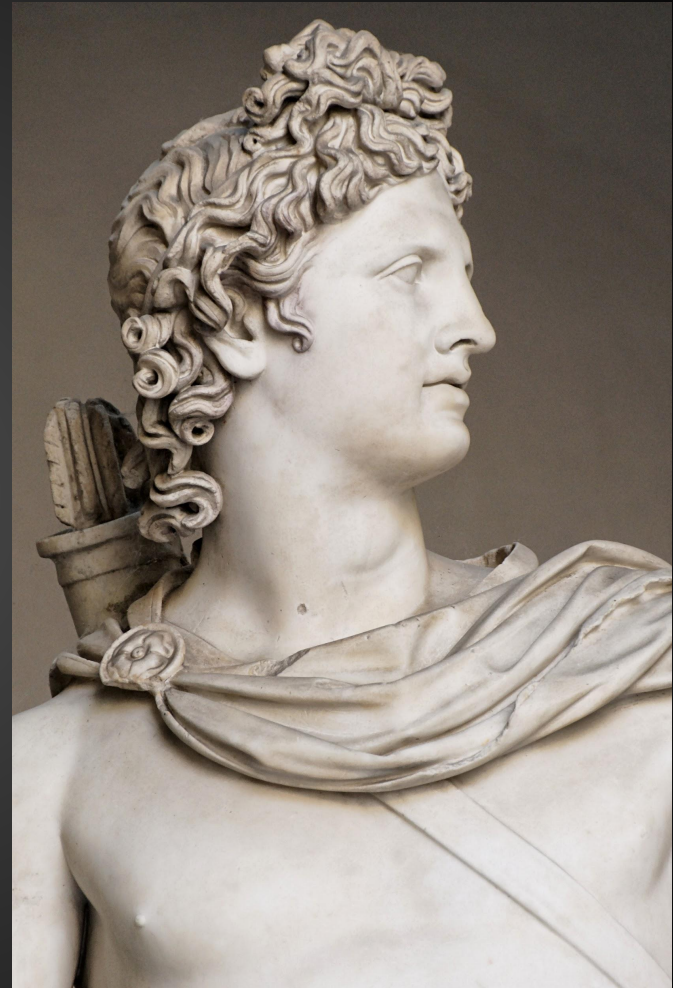
Apollo's Love Affairs

- Apollo expressed interest in a nymph named Daphne, but when he tried to embrace her, she transformed into a laurel tree —this tree became sacred to Apollo
- Apollo bore a son with the nymph Cyrene; this son, Aristaeus, became a protector of cattle and fruit trees and a god of hunting and husbandry
- His most famous mortal love was Hecuba, the king of Troy's wife; she bore him Troilus, and it was foretold by an oracle that if he reached age 20, Troy could not be defeated
 - Unfortunately, Troilus was ambushed and killed by Achilles



Worshipping Apollo

- The worship of Apollo occurred not only in Greece, but throughout the ancient world
- Shrines could be found in places from Egypt to northwest Turkey
- He became a favorite Roman god; they built their first temple to honor him in 432 B.C.
- Apollo is featured in art and literature such as the Greek Iliad, a poem about the Trojan War
- Ancient sculptures show Apollo as a handsome youth
- Apollo was also honored at Delphi, where bay laurel and barley were burned as incense



Works Cited

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